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Testimony on SB 466: An Act Concerning Continuing Education Courses for Physicians

By Senator Toni Boucher

Public Health Committee, February 20, 2013

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 466: An Act Concerning Continuing Education Courses for Physicians.

Section 20-10b of the Connecticut General statutes currently requires physicians applying for license renewal to undergo a minimum of fifty contact hours of continuing medical education within the previous two years. The statute further stipulates that this continuing education will be in the physician's area of practice, that it reflect the professional needs of the licensee in order to meet the health care needs of the public, and that it include at least one contact hour of education in the following: Infectious diseases, risk management, sexual assault, domestic violence, and cultural competency.

Each of these areas of study is important and relevant to the improvement of public health. However, mandating physicians to take all five subjects every two years may not be the most efficient use of their time and resources. For example, many doctors work in specialties that do not treat infectious disease, and where their knowledge of sexual assault and domestic violence is unlikely to factor into the treatment of their patients. Furthermore, repeating each topic every two years will not benefit the physician if there has been little change in each subject matter.

SB 466 would change the statutes to exempt doctors who have completed these five courses from taking them every two years, while preserving the original requirement for fifty hours of continuing medical education. This would give physicians an opportunity to devote more of their time to subjects which are related to their practice.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.